

C an elongated scalpel recess closed at each end and receiving said [adapted to receive a] scalpel [having a blade and a handle], and having a first portion receiving [adapted to receive] said scalpel blade and a second portion receiving [adapted to receive] at least part of said scalpel handle, said portions having a width slightly greater than that of the major cross-sectional dimension of the scalpel and depth slightly greater than that of the minor cross-sectional dimension of the scalpel, the length of said scalpel recess being such that the scalpel blade is located within one of said portions irrespective of the position of the scalpel in the scalpel recess, and

guide means for guiding a scalpel placed in said container to said scalpel recess; the arrangement being such that the scalpel received within said scalpel recess is positioned therein such that the scalpel blade is not directed towards the opening of the scalpel recess whereby a user's fingers are substantially prevented from contacting a cutting portion of the scalpel blade.

In accordance with the amendments made to claim 15, please enter the following amendments to claim 2 and claims 4-11.

C 2 2. [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein said container includes inclined walls converging to said opening, the inclined walls constituting said guide means.

C 3 4.3 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 16, wherein said [instrument] scalpel recess has sidewalls and a base, the junctions thereof being radiussed such that a scalpel is disposed to rest in the recess with its major cross-sectional dimension parallel to said base.

6. 4 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [and] said container including access means for providing a user with access to the scalpel handle for removing the scalpel from said scalpel [instrument] recess.

7. 5 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said access means includes a finger access recess, the cross sectional configuration of said finger access recess being such as to allow a user's fingers to contact the scalpel handle for removing the scalpel from said scalpel [instrument] recess, the position of said finger access recess being such that the scalpel blade is not located within said finger access recess irrespective of the position of the scalpel in the instrument recess.

7. 6 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [and] said container including barrier means for preventing a user's fingers from entering said scalpel [instrument] recess.

7. 7 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said barrier means constitutes the opening to said scalpel [instrument] recess, the width of said opening being such as to allow a scalpel to enter the recess but to prevent a user's fingers entering the recess.

8. 8 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [and] said container including handle means whereby a user can hold the container.

10. 9 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [and] said container including handle mounting means for mounting a detachable handle whereby a user can hold the container.

11. 10 [A container] An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [and] said container including a plurality of said scalpel [instrument] recesses each adapted to receive a scalpel therein.

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Applicant also respectfully requests re-entry of claim 16 as originally filed. Claim

16 reads as follows:

11/16. A container for holding a suture needle holder and a suturing needle held thereby during surgical procedures, the container including: -

a substantially semi-cylindrical needle recess adapted to receive the suturing needle

therein, and

guide means for guiding a suturing needle held by a suture needle holder to said needle

recess;

the arrangement being such that a suturing needle received within said needle recess is positioned therein such that the point of the suturing needle is positioned within the needle recess such that a user's fingers are substantially prevented from contacting the point.

Please enter claim 19 as follows:

19. A method of retrievably and temporarily storing a scalpel between uses of the scalpel during a surgical procedure, said scalpel having a handle portion and a blade and having a major cross-sectional dimension and a minor cross-sectional dimension, said method comprising:

placing the scalpel held by an operator into an instrument recess in an instrument holding container, the scalpel being held within the container to be easily accessible during surgical procedures, and

removing the scalpel by the operator from the instrument recess, said instrument recess being closed at each end and adapted to receive said scalpel, and having a first portion adapted to receive said scalpel blade and a second portion adapted to receive at least part of said scalpel handle, said portions having a width slightly greater than that of the major cross-sectional